The KJA Bulletin

Apr. 1998 • Nissan 5758



David Ovadia

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NOTE:

KJA Bulletin is published around Rosh Hashana (September) and around Passover (March). Please submit your articles for publishing 30 days prior to the deadlines.

A Message from The President

This will probably be my last message as the President of **KJA.** Time has passed very quickly and it's time again to nominate new Board members and officers. The nominating committee headed by David Ovadia are looking for candidates to serve in. With this bulletin, you will find a document that outlines the process of nomination and the candidate qualification. I urge you to participate with the process and to volunteer for our various committees.

During the last 4 years, I had the opportunity and privilege to meet with many of you to discuss different issues of interest and concern. One important observation I have noted is that you all have been very generous and caring. You all seemed to strive for a common important goal of preserving our customs and traditions.

My next two months will be a little more challenging and demanding. I will be working closely with the newly elected president. We will try to finalize all outstanding issues and ensure smooth transition.

I would like to thank you for the support you have given me. It sure made my job easier. It has been a pleasure and honor to serve you. I look forward to continue help our organization and to serve our Board in a different capacity.

On behalf of our Board of Directors, I wish you a very happy Passover.

Maurice Pessah

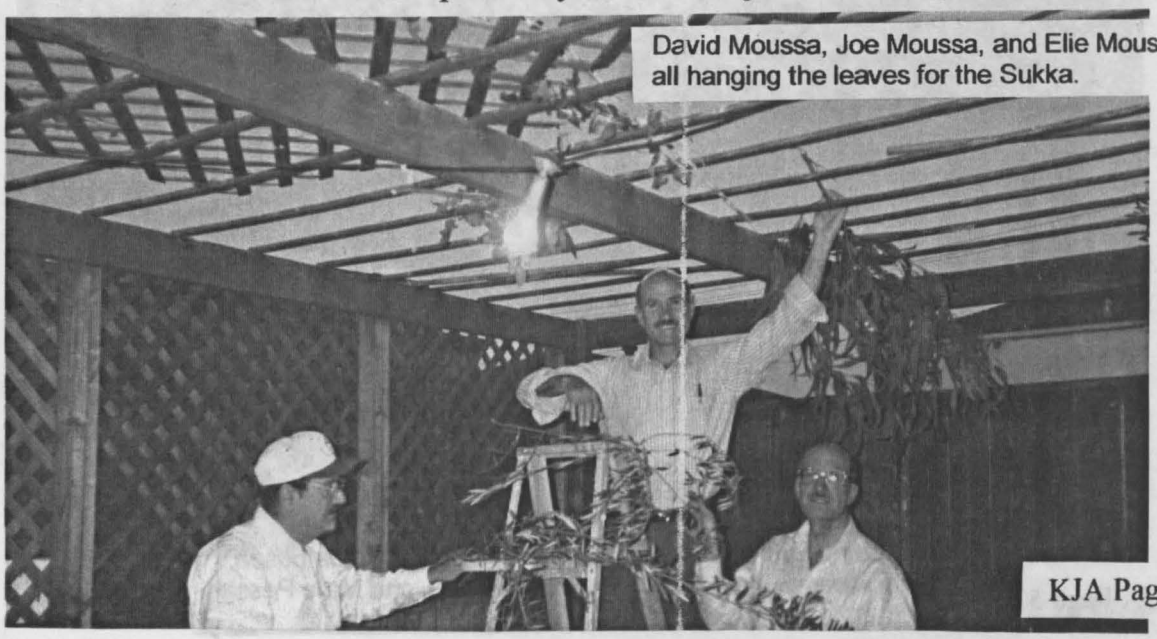
Happy Passover!



Sukkot 97`

By: Nora Massuda

Sukkot was lovely this year. Many people enjoyed decorating the Sukkah and hanging fruit, leaves, and other decorations around it. Many people also gathered together in the Sukkah, sang songs and prayed. Even though the weather was not the greatest, everyone had a warm feeling because the community had gathered together in order to celebrate. For all of you who missed it, we are sorry that you missed such a joyous occasion and hope that you will all join in next year.

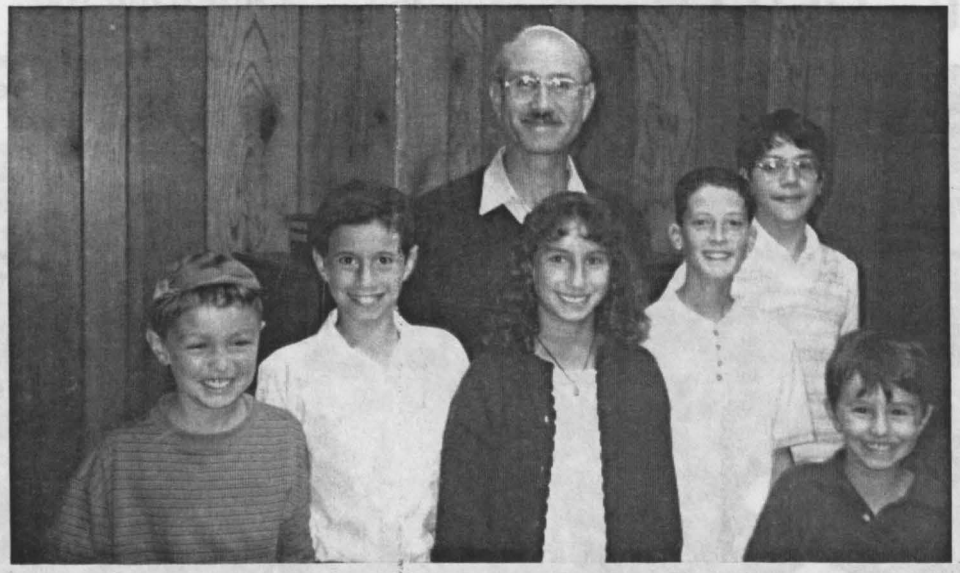


David Moussa, Joe Moussa, and Elie Moussa, all hanging the leaves for the Sukka.

Simchat Torah 97'

By: Nora Massuda

The holidays were wonderful as usual and in particular was Simchat Torah. Simchat Torah is the celebration of the Torah. We read the end as well at the beginning to symbolize the cycle that never ends. However, the participation from our young ones was not as high as we have had in the past. Special thanks to Joel Massuda, Rachel Moussa, Robert Ovadia, Aaron Pessah, Marc Pessah and Jonah Sinick for participating this year. We hope that they will return along with all their friends for next year's Celebration.



From left to right: Robert Ovadia, Aaron Pessah, Joe Moussa, Rachel Moussa, Joel Massuda, Jonah Sinick, and Marc Pessah

The Sukka dinner table; singing songs and eating dinner.



The Lost Jews of Kaifeng, China

In Palo Alto, an exhibit reveals life of a long-isolated community

By Jeanne Cooper
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

Published from the "San Francisco Chronicle"

They came by the Silk Road and they stayed at the behest of the emperor. They built their first synagogue in 1163 and flourished unnoticed for centuries. Then, almost equally unobserved, the Jews of Kaifeng, China, almost vanished through assimilation.

ON VIEW

Photographs of this hidden enclave's people and artifacts are on exhibit at the Koret Gallery at the Albert L. Schultz Jewish Community Center in Palo Alto through October 19. The original photos and objects are now scattered around the globe, largely in Canadian, Israeli and American collections, the last synagogue of Kaifeng was demolished in 1860.

Despite this material Diaspora, the reproduced images still have a powerful effect. "When you see ancient symbols carved in stone thousands of miles from their ancestral home, it's incredible," says gallery director Nancy Gordon.

Menlo Park's Sino-Judaic Institute organized the intriguing exhibit, which will travel across the United States before taking up residence in the Kaifeng Municipal Museum. Although a floor of the museum is devoted to the Jewish community, there is still much to learn about this lost tribe.

"The important issue is not to know why they assimilated, but how did they hang on for so long," Gordon says, echoing the scholars who contributed the informative wall text.

Intrepid Jewish traders, perhaps from Persia, Yemen or India originally, are believed to have settled in Kaifeng when it was the capital of the Song Dynasty (960-1126 A.D.). The emperor encouraged them to settle there and preserve their customs, foreign as they seemed to the Chinese at first. Their monotheism would be a perennial source of confusion, leading some Chinese to call them "The Muslims With the Blue Caps."

Known also as "The Sect That Teaches the Scriptures" or, in a reference to their dietary laws, "The Sect That Plucks Out Sinews," the Jews of Kaifeng did eventually adapt some of the ways of their neighbors wearing pigtails, binding their daughters' feet and studying Confucianism as a way of attaining government positions.

By the 15th century, they had also acquired Chinese surnames, a privilege granted after a Jewish person exposed treason within the royal family. This gave the community yet another sobriquet: "The Eight Clans with the Seven Surnames." Those distinctive patronymics survive today among their several hundred descendants in Kaifeng who are otherwise indistinguishable from their neighbors.

The Jews of Kaifeng gradually lost contact with the West when foreign travel was prohibited in 1500. Jesuit missionaries "rediscovered" them in 1605, shortly before the last rebuilding of the synagogue. By the late 1800s, though, there was no rabbi left and the impoverished Jews had to sell their Torahs.

Today, the Sino-Judaic Institute is working to help the Kaifeng Jews reconstruct their community and their traditions. The exhibit includes photographs of those who are still proud to call themselves not Chinese but *youtai*, Jewish.

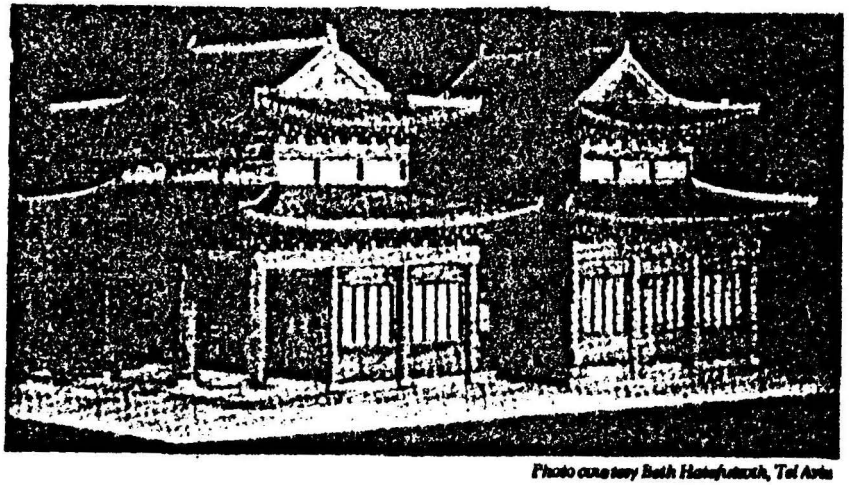
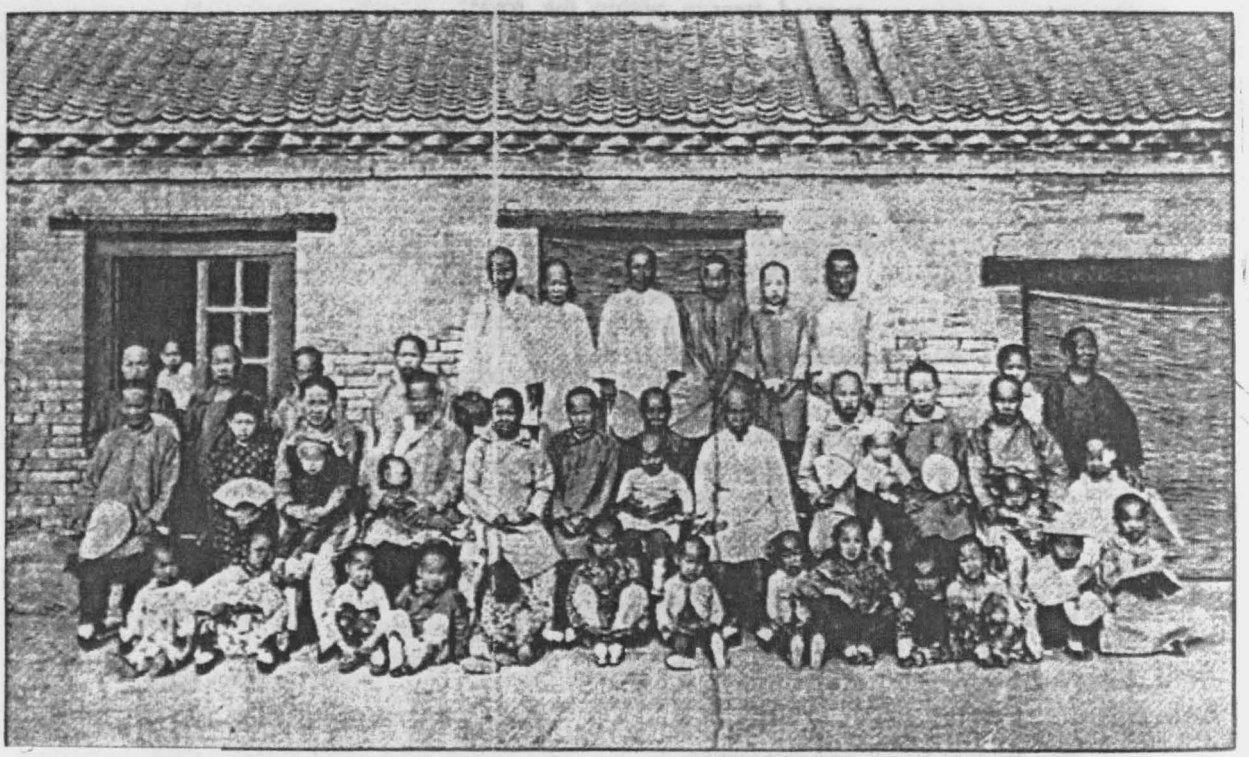


Photo courtesy Beth Hatefutsoth, Tel Aviv

CHINESE INFLUENCE: A model of the synagogue of Kaifeng, based on the description of a Jesuit priest who visited the city in 1721.



Above, photo courtesy the Koret Gallery; below, courtesy Marvin Josephson

THEN AND NOW: By the 20th century, the Jews of Kaifeng (above, in 1919) were virtually indistinguishable from their neighbors in custom and appearance. At right, YiLing Livia Chen-Josephson celebrates her bat mitzvah in Kaifeng in 1990, helping to revive Jewish rituals within the community.



On My Way Back Home from San Francisco

By: Mourad El Kodsi

My wife and I decided to leave the very cold weather of Rochester and go to San Francisco to enjoy its warm weather. Unfortunately, San Francisco weather was not as good as we have hoped! I had rained almost everyday for the two months we were there. In spite of the very unusual weather condition, my wife and I have enjoyed our stay in that beautiful city. The people were friendly and the members of the Karaites community have welcomed us all the time.

Saturdays were by far the best days of all. The service in our synagogue was rich and moving. It was a joy to watch my grandson Robert who just turned 9 in February, join the prayer in a fluent Hebrew. Thanks to the Hebrew school he attends and to his grandfather, Mr. Eli Ovadia who tends and takes care of him on a regular basis.

As always, everything has an end. On Monday February 23rd, we took an early morning plane heading back to Rochester, stopping in Detroit. I was very tired, but my thought were not. They were still vivid with the memories of our 2 months stay with relatives and friends. Without noticing, my thoughts carried me away. I found myself once again among the worshippers in our temple B'nai Israel. The temple was full with older people, young adult, and children everywhere chanting the prayers with the "Hazzan" It was a beautiful and very touching experience. What struck me the most was the large number of teens and children who attended the service. Their performance was just magnificent! They all seemed to know the prayer songs and melodies! The service was the best I have ever seen and attended.

(Cont. on page 13)

KJA Adult Camp Reunion 97'

By: Sallie Marzouk

The KJA Adult Camp Reunion over the Thanksgiving holiday was a great success! Seventeen adults, mostly ones who had attended previous camps, spent four days in Lake Tahoe relaxing, eating, skiing, and playing. All joined efforts to cook a wonderful Thanksgiving dinner. Old friendships were rekindled and new bonds were made. It was a Thanksgiving all will remember with fond memories. Thanks to all who contributed!

(con't from previous page)



From top left: Habib Licha, Davina Moussa.

Middle row: Sam Saddik, Ed Mousad, Eric Sciammas, Stephanie Shamoun, Sabrina Selim, David Leesha, Ben Aslan.

Last row: Joe Moussa, Sallie Marzouk, Gena Saddik.

Missing from picture: Morris Moussa, David Moussa, David & Kat Ovadia.

(El Kodsi from page 13)

After the prayer, we all exchanged the "Shabat Shalom" greetings and headed for the Kiddush. The food prepared the previous day by the ladies of temple was rich and traditional. Everything seemed to work out perfectly that day. I was very touched by this experience and started to cry when suddenly my wife tapped me on my shoulder and asked me `` Mourad, are you O.K. ? ``. It was then I realized that I was dreaming !

But does this have to be only a dream ? Will I ever see this dream materialized and turn into a reality ? With the efforts of our Board of Directors encouraged by the sincerity of our community, I am sure one day my dream will come true. Let's all hope it will be soon.

KJA 15th Purim Party

KJA has held its 15th Purim party on March 15th, at Café Riggio restaurant located in San Francisco. The party arrangement and the atmosphere were just beautiful ! There were over 120 adults and children enjoying this annual event. During the party, our president, Maurice Pessah presented Michael Ovadia with a plaque, in recognition of all his efforts to get our WEB page published. Maurice has also thanked and acknowledged Mrs. Fortunee Lichaa for organizing the event, Oreett Moussa for managing the children activities, and Joshua Pessah for being The DJ and providing the music. Jacob Moussa took several family pictures during the party. The pictures will be mailed to the families once they are developed.

All those who attended the party agreed that KJA 15th Purim party was a very happy and entertaining family event.



Elie Moussa, Sarah Marsaa & Solonge Marsaa lighting the candles for Purim.



Joe Pessah Giving light to Subrina Sutherland & Malika Ovadia, while Elie Ovadia sings songs.

KJA honors Mr. and Mrs. Elie Massouda

On January 3rd, 1998, a special Sabbath service was held in our Synagogue in recognition of Mr. and Mrs. Elie Massouda for their generous contribution. Following the service, a traditional Karaites Luncheon was held at Sea Spray Lane Recreation Center in Foster City, California. Entertainment for the luncheon was provided by a very funny couple playing different musical instruments. Good music for the youth and the adult was provided by DJ Joshua Pessah.

During the Luncheon, The Massoudas' were honored and presented with an appreciation plaque for their continued and generous support of our community. The Massouda's elected to keep the plaque displayed in our Synagogue.



Our President, Maurice Pessah presenting the appreciation plaque to Mr. & Mrs. Elie Massuda.



Mr. & Mrs. Elie Massuda being entertained by the Violin player.

Joke Corner



"Back To School"

Saddam Hussein is visiting a school. In one class, he asks the students if anyone can give him an example of a "tragedy".

One little boy stands up and offers that "If my best friend who lives next door was playing in the street when a car came along and killed him, that would be a tragedy."

"No," Hussein says, "That would be an ACCIDENT."

A girl raises her hand. "If a school bus carrying fifty Iraqi children drove off a cliff, killing everyone involved... that would be a tragedy."

"I'm afraid not," explains Hussein. "That is what we would call a GREAT LOSS."

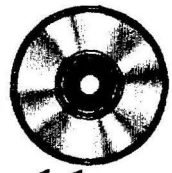
The room is silent; none of the other children volunteer. "What?" asks Hussein, "Is there no one here who can give me an example of a tragedy?"

Finally, a boy in the back raises his hand. In a timid voice, he speaks: "If an airplane carrying Yassar Arafat, Colonel Kaddafi, and Saddam Hussein were blown up by a bomb, THAT would be a tragedy."

"Wonderful!" Hussein beams. "Marvelous! And can you tell me WHY that would be a tragedy?"
"Well," says the boy, "because it wouldn't be an accident, and it certainly would be no great loss!"

Mailbox





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BAR MITZVAHS

Shawn Rasson, son of Joseph and Denise Rasson of Danville, California, celebrated his Bar Mitzvah on Nov. 1, 1997.





Maurice & Sallie Moussa were married in a lovely ceremony on Sunday March 22, 1998 at B'nai Israel Congregation in Maryland. Sallie is the daugther of Mr. & Mrs. Simon Marzouk. Maurice is the son of Mr. & Mrs. Elie Moussa.

*Please inform us with any graduations, Weddings, Births, Bar or Bat Mitzvahs or any events that you would like us to announce.

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TO OUR DAUGHTER
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Feb 8, 1981 - Nov 30, 1997

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Thank You
Fred and Jacqueline Lichaa

We remember the recent passing of:

Baroukh Abdel-Wahed	Foster City, CA	October 16, 1997
Jacob Pessah	S. San Francisco, CA	October 30, 1997

Lasagna Verdi – A Popular Italian Recipe



Ingredients

½ chopped onion
2 tbsp. Butter or margarine
1/3 cup Chablis or other dry wine
1 large clove garlic, mince
1 can (10 1/2oz.) condensed cream of chicken soup
2 packages (10 oz. Each) frozen chopped spinach, cooked and drained
1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
1 egg, slightly beaten
¼ tbsp. Italian seasoning, crushed
2 tbsp. Salad oil
1 can (10 3/4oz.) condensed tomato soup
½ cup water
12 lasagna noodles, cooked and drained

Cook onion in butter until tender. Add wine; simmer a few minutes. Blend in chicken soup, spinach, Parmesan cheese and egg. To make sauce, in a saucepan cook garlic and Italian seasoning in oil. Add remaining ingredients except noodles. Simmer 30 minutes.
In 2-quart shallow baking dish pour ½ sauce; top with 4 noodles. Spread with ½ of filling; top with 4 more noodles. Spread with remaining noodles and sauce. Bake at 350 F for 45 minutes.
Let stand 15 minutes before serving. Cut in 6 portions and enjoy.

IF YOU HAVE A FAVORITE PRECIPE AND WOULD LIKE TO SHARE IT WITH OTHERS, PLEASE SEND OR EMAIL IT TO OREETT MOUSSA. (PLEASE SEE ADDRESSES ON PAGE 1)

FUN PAGE

THE CHALLENGE CORNER

1- The bible is divided in three sections namely : the Torah, the Prophets and The Holy Scriptures. Which one of these books is not part of the Torah ?

a. Genesis b. Exodus c. Numbers d. Jeremiah



2- Which one of these holidays the Israelites did not know of during their wondering in the desert with Moses?

a. Passover b. Yom Kippour c. Sukkot d. Purim

3- When is the Milah (circumcision) ceremony performed ?

a. on the eighth day after the birth of a baby boy b. as soon as the mother of the baby boy recovers c. on the seventh day after the birth of a baby boy

4- The Karaites believe in:

a. one written Bible b. one written Torah only c. one written Bible and one oral Torah d. none of the above

5- When Pharaoh commanded to drown all newborn boys of the Israelites in the Nile River, Moses mother decided to hide him

a. in Pharaoh's own palace b. in a basket among the bul-rushes c. in Miriam's (her daughter) house

6- Name the items that are not explicitly mentioned in the Bible

a. Menorah b. Hanukkah c. Tsitsit d. Hamentasha e. Bread of affliction ■

עברי אנכי ואת-ה' אלהי השמים אני ירא (יונה א,ט)

I am a hebrew and I fear the Lord, the God of Heaven (Jonah 1,9)



David Ovadia